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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the Security Council contained in the statement issued by its President on 26 September 2001 (S/PRST/2001/25), in which the Council requested me to continue to keep it regularly informed about the situation in the Central African Republic and about the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (BONUCA). In its presidential statement adopted on 7 April (S/PRST/2009/5), the Council welcomed my recommendation of 3 March to establish a United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) to succeed BONUCA (see S/2009/128). The Council also requested me to inform it, in my next report on the situation in the Central African Republic, about the structure and strength of BINUCA.

2. The report provides an update on the political, socio-economic, security, humanitarian and human rights developments in the Central African Republic and on the activities of BONUCA since my last report on 26 November 2008 (S/2008/733) and the detailed briefing provided on 10 March 2009 by François Lonseny Fall, my former Special Representative and head of BONUCA (see S/PV.6091). The report also outlines the proposed structure and requisite resources for BINUCA.

3. The report highlights continuing efforts to consolidate the fragile peace in the Central African Republic and outlines, to that end, measures taken in particular to end the armed rebellion in the north of the country, to strengthen State institutions and to implement the recommendations adopted at last December's crucial inclusive political dialogue. At the same time, it points to persistent challenges to the peacebuilding process, including mounting armed attacks which not only threatened to compromise the peace process but also generated heightened humanitarian and human rights concerns.

4. While acknowledging the significant challenges facing the peace process as a result, in particular, of the re-emergence of rebel groups in the northern part of the country and the delay in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the electoral calendar, the report recognizes that a number of important positive steps on the way forward have been taken which have

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heightened expectations that the country may be entering a new phase of peace and stability.

II. Political situation

5. During the period under review, the political situation in the Central African Republic was dominated by efforts to implement the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue, on which the success or otherwise of the peace process essentially hinges. Following the departure in March of my former Special Representative, Mr. Fall, I dispatched Sammy Kum Buo, Director of the Africa II Division in the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, to Bangui on 24 March, to serve as Officer-in-Charge of BONUCA, while I was engaged in the process of selecting my new Special Representative and in order to avoid a leadership vacuum in the mission at a critical juncture in the peace process.

6. Since his arrival in Bangui, Mr. Buo has held a series of meetings with key national leaders, including President François Bozizé, Prime Minister Faustin Touadéra and the Chairman of the Follow-up Committee for the implementation of the dialogue recommendations, Henri Maidou. He also met with leaders and representatives of political-military groups, including the President of the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la République et la démocratie (APRD), Jean-Jacques Demafouth, who is also the first Vice-Chairman of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Steering Committee, as well as with representatives of the democratic opposition and civil society. He consulted widely with resident members of the diplomatic community, the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions as well as with Ambassador Albert Akendengué, the Special Representative of President Omar Bongo Ondimba, the subregional peace mediator for the Central African Republic. Ambassador Akendengué is also the resident head of the subregional peacebuilding mission in the Central African Republic, MICOPAX (Mission de consolidation de la paix en République Centrafricaine). On 4 June, a senior delegation from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), led by its Deputy Secretary-General in charge of peace and security, met with Mr. Buo to discuss the role and possible enhancement of the peacebuilding capacity of MICOPAX in light of its envisaged involvement in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes. Mr. Buo has also worked closely with the Special Envoy of the African Union, Ambassador Sadok Fayala, and with Djovi Gally, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie.

7. In its aforementioned presidential statement S/PRST/2009/5, the Security Council welcomed "the recent progress towards implementing the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue" and reiterated "its full support for this process, as an effective framework to foster national reconciliation and stability in the Central African Republic". The Council's statement reflected the broad recognition, including by national stakeholders themselves, of the central role of the inclusive political dialogue in the peace process in the Central African Republic.

8. The slow pace of implementation of the dialogue recommendations demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining the momentum created by that important meeting. On 28 January 2009, President Bozizé established a broad-based Government, as recommended during the dialogue, but the Government's

composition was criticized by the democratic opposition and some political-military groups that felt it did not comply with the principles of parity and consensus agreed upon at the dialogue. The Union des forces vives de la nation (UFVN), the main democratic opposition alliance, consequently refused to participate in that Government, which includes representatives of two political-military groups (APRD and the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR)), civil society and some opposition political parties. In addition, three institutions recommended by the dialogue, namely the Follow-up Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of the dialogue, the Steering Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and the High Court of Justice, have been set up. Owing to the lack of resources, the dialogue Follow-up Committee has not been functioning as effectively as it should, while the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is yet to commence concrete operations.

9. The dialogue Follow-up Committee, set up on 29 January 2009, meets on a monthly basis to review progress in the implementation of the dialogue recommendations. At its most recent meeting, held in Bangui on 18 and 19 May, the Committee again regretted the slow pace of implementation of the recommendations of the dialogue. It also complained about the lack of adequate logistical and financial resources to carry out its functions. It has adopted a revised budget of 700 million CFA francs (about US$ 1.5 million) for its operations in 2009. The Government has indicated its intention to contribute CFAF 300 million (about $600,000), while the United Nations has pledged an initial contribution of $200,000 through the emergency window of the Peacebuilding Fund.

10. The Steering Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration has made important progress towards advancing critical phases of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for the Central African Republic. Essential programme documentation on disarmament and demobilization within the context of the Central African Republic has been completed and an estimated list of 7,902 potential beneficiaries has been submitted by the four political-military groups participating in the Steering Committee. The validation of these groups has not taken place. The staffing of the team for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, located within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Bangui, is currently under way, while preliminary planning for the reintegration phase has begun.

11. The prompt and effective implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme would require financial resources the Government says it does not have. Only the Peacebuilding Fund has so far disbursed a contribution, in the amount of about $4 million, which is expected to cover the first two phases of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, that is, disarmament and demobilization. That leaves a shortfall of $16 million of the estimated $20 million budgeted for the initial execution of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration projects in the country. While the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), in a communiqué issued following its extraordinary summit, held in Libreville on 30 January 2009, pledged CFAF 8 billion (about $16 million) for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in the Central African Republic, it is still uncertain when those funds would be made available for that purpose. In a meeting in Bangui on 23 May with the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configuration

on the Central African Republic, Ambassador Jan Grauls, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, President Bozizé indicated that he was prepared to make available for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the CFAF 5 billion (about $10 million) that had been deposited so far in the Central Bank. He would also transfer the remaining CFAF 3 billion once the money was disbursed by the three remaining CEMAC States.

12. I am concerned that any further delay in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme could heighten tensions in the ranks of ex-combatants waiting to be disarmed, raising the risk that some may withdraw from the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process altogether and return to violence. A deteriorated security situation in the country may negatively impact the preparations for the 2010 elections.

13. Regarding elections, on 12 May, the Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Élie Ouéfio, officially inaugurated a broad-based ad hoc Committee called for in the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue to review the electoral code in preparation for the 2010 legislative and presidential elections. The Minister, who is responsible for electoral matters within the Government, has repeatedly stressed to the interim head of BONUCA that once the Committee has agreed on a draft electoral code, the text would be submitted promptly for adoption by Parliament. He has insisted that such action would be followed by the establishment of the independent electoral commission, as called for in the recommendations of the dialogue. The formal engagement of the United Nations in the electoral process in the Central African Republic is contingent upon the creation of that institution, which is seen as crucial for the organization of transparent and credible polls, especially given its responsibility for such critical tasks as the revision of voters' lists and the demarcation of electoral constituencies.

14. As the Constitution of the Central African Republic stipulates that presidential elections should be held at the latest 45 days before the end of the term of the incumbent and, furthermore, does not explicitly address the issue of the possible postponement of national elections, non-respect of the electoral calendar could create a constitutional power vacuum, capable of throwing the country into a major and potentially violent political crisis. In that connection, the main opposition political parties have told Mr. Buo that they would not accept the postponement of the 2010 polls. They have pointed to the absence of financial provisions for elections in the 2009 budget to suggest that the Government all along did not plan to hold the polls in 2010, reflecting the intense mistrust that has already developed on the sensitive electoral issue. At a meeting with the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission configuration on the Central African Republic, on 21 May, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his Government's intention to make the necessary budget allocations for the 2010 elections.

15. To help create a climate more conducive to elections, the interim head of BONUCA has intensified discussions with senior Government officials, including with the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization, to stress the importance of committing to the organization of elections within the constitutional time frame. Mr. Buo has also reminded the authorities of their responsibility to ensure safe and peaceful conditions for elections, especially after Martin Ziguélé, head of the principal opposition political party, the Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain

(MLPC), complained of intimidation and harassment by State security forces. While reiterating their determination to organize the polls on schedule, the authorities have highlighted the Government's financial limitations and appealed for donor support. They have also refuted allegations of intimidation, with the Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization challenging alleged victims to provide details of specific cases, which he has promised to investigate. The European Union has announced a contribution of 4 million euros to support the 2010 elections, the only confirmed donor so far. The interim head of BONUCA has emphasized the potential benefits, including for resource mobilization purposes, of the proposed establishment of the independent electoral commission, as its timely creation could lead to increased donor support.

16. Meanwhile, in a gesture likely to promote national unity and reconciliation, President Bozizé, on 23 May, organized a State funeral for Professor Abel Goumba, a veteran opposition political leader who, up to the time of his death, served as "Médiateur de la République". He was also a former Vice-President, Prime Minister and one of the founding fathers of the Republic.

17. In its aforementioned presidential statement of 7 April, the Security Council demanded that all armed groups which had not yet done so, in particular those which had initiated military operations in the northern part of the Central African Republic, cease violence immediately. The activities of three rebel groups, the Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (MLCJ), led by Abakar Sabone, the Front démocratiques du peuple centrafricain (FDPC), led by Abdoulaye Miskine and Charles Massi's Convergence des patriates centrafricains pour la justice et la paix (CPJP), have raised the most concern. While Abakar Sabone and Abdoulaye Miskine participated in the inclusive political dialogue and signed peace agreements with the Government, Charles Massi was a senior minister in the Government until January 2008. The three leaders turned to rebellion because of the alleged Government failure to fully implement the recommendations of the dialogue, as they claimed, in particular, that the Government set up by President Bozizé in January 2009 was not, in their view, sufficiently broad-based.

18. I have encouraged diplomatic and political efforts to end the rebellion and to persuade its leaders to embrace the peace process. To that end, President Bozizé sought the assistance of the Libyan leader and current Chairperson of the African Union, Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, who reaffirmed his support for efforts to find peaceful and lasting solutions to the ongoing instability in the northern part of the Central African Republic. Meanwhile, the interim head of BONUCA has continued to work closely on the ground with authorities of the Central African Republic and the leadership of the subregional peacekeeping force, MICOPAX, to facilitate the return and temporary relocation at the M'Poko military base in Bangui of Abakar Sabone. Mr. Sabone, who had recently informed the interim head of BONUCA of his readiness to end his movement's rebellion, join the peace process and submit to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, returned to Bangui on 31 May. It is important for the other rebel leaders to follow Mr. Sabone's example and cease violence immediately, as called for by the Security Council. Meanwhile, President Bozizé reportedly met with one of the two remaining rebel leaders, Mr. Miskine, on the margins of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States summit, held in Tripoli on 29 May, with a view to facilitating Mr. Miskine's eventual return to Bangui to join the peace process. The other rebel leader, Charles Massi, was reportedly arrested

and detained by Chadian authorities, who indicated that they plan to put him on trial for attempted destabilization and alleged violation of Chad's territorial integrity.

III. Military and security situation

19. The security situation in Bangui and its surrounding areas has remained relatively calm during the period under review, although incidents of burglary, break-ins and racketeering, sometimes involving elements in defence and security forces, continued to be reported. An isolated but particularly violent confrontation took place on 12 April at Bangui's main cattle market, involving ethnic Peulh cattle herders and Chadian meat traders, which left over 30 persons dead and many others wounded. The authorities intervened promptly to restore calm and prevent a recurrence or revenge attacks.

20. In the northern provinces of Bamingui-Bangoran, Nana-Gribizi, Ouahm, Ouahm-Pendé and Vakaga, violence continued to dominate developments, provoked by several different factors. In some cases, rebel groups reportedly carried out attacks in Bossembélé, Bocaranga, Batangafo, Kabo and Ndélé, often withdrawing after being confronted by Government troops (Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA)) or local self-defence fighters. Violent attacks against civilians sometimes ensued, in the form of reprisals, for perceived collaboration with or support of rebel groups. In other cases, the violence was often the result of criminal activity, inter-communal confrontations and external incursions.

21. While the Central African Republic has largely avoided ethnic conflict in the past, I am increasingly concerned that growing inter-communal tensions, especially between pastoralists, who are largely of Peulh ethnic background, and local ethnic communities in the north-east, including the Kara, the Rounga and the Goula, could be exploited in the prevailing climate of rampant insecurity and politically motivated rebellion to sow ethnic discord and violence. That concern increased with the uncontrolled circulation of weapons in civilian communities and the proliferation of self-defence and vigilante groups, which generally operate outside the law, purportedly to protect local communities against outside forces.

22. The absence of effective State authority throughout the national territory and along the borders of the Central African Republic, especially with Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, remained a source of concern, in particular as reports of incursions into the north-eastern and south-eastern borders of the Central African Republic by foreign armed groups have persisted.

23. In the prevailing climate of widespread insecurity in vast areas of the country, it is generally recognized that progress towards the reduction of violence and the enhancement of security and stability depends above all on the effective implementation of envisaged disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform programmes to ensure that the various rebel and other armed groups are disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated into society as constructive citizens, and that national security institutions become effective and accountable. In the meantime, BONUCA and the United Nations country team continued to provide support to enhance the operational capacities of the police and gendarmes and to provide training to the defence and security forces in the need to respect international humanitarian and human rights law and the rights of women and children. Meanwhile, the national inter-ministerial coordination secretariat on

security sector reform, headed by the Minister of Defence has, following wide consultations, including with representatives of international organizations and donors, decided to organize a round-table conference in the near future to raise resources to finance a pilot security sector reform project focusing on security, justice and development. As security sector reform is critical for the sustainable stabilization of the Central African Republic, I appeal to the international community to generously support the forthcoming round table and future security sector reform projects generously.

24. On 24 April, the interim Head of BONUCA met in Bangui with a joint team of experts from the African Union, ECCAS and the European Union, which was visiting the Central African Republic to assess the operations of MICOPAX, in support of the Central African Republic peace process. The discussions included a review of the force's capacity in view of its involvement in support of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

IV. Humanitarian situation

25. Despite the progress made towards peace and stability in 2008, especially following the signature of the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement in June 2008 and the convening of the inclusive political dialogue in December, developments in the first quarter of 2009 revealed that the peace process was not yet irreversible and, in fact, remained fragile. As a result, thousands of Central African Republic nationals remain uprooted by violence and instability, with an estimated 118,000 of them said to be displaced in the north (mainly in the north-west) of the country, and a total of 137,400 based in southern Chad and eastern Cameroon as refugees. Peace agreements signed in 2008 made possible the return of an estimated 85,000 displaced persons and refugees, mainly in the north-east, often to find their houses destroyed and their fields overgrown. Since January 2009, an estimated 10,000 more persons are said to have become internally displaced, while over 18,000 have fled insecurity in the north to Chad. The Central African Republic also hosts 3,797 Sudanese refugees, who fled Darfur in successive waves from May 2007, including 3,244 in the Sam Ouandja refugee camp, of whom 1,986 are children. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees led an inter-agency emergency response team to the camp to provide humanitarian assistance and improve the infrastructure of the site, in close cooperation with the Central African Republic's National Commission for Refugees and the local population.

26. For its part, the World Food Programme (WFP) assisted 216,000 vulnerable and conflict-affected persons with a total of 7,300 tons of food commodities, including emergency relief to internally displaced persons and Sudanese refugees, school feeding for primary and pre-school children, nutritional supplementary feeding for malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women, food for work projects for the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, food aid to children formerly associated with armed groups and food safety net support to HIV-affected households. WFP also continued to facilitate the movement of personnel and goods for the use of the humanitarian community in the Central African Republic through its United Nations Humanitarian Air Service and its logistics support (trucks and warehouse) capacity.

27. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in partnership with the Ministry of Education and in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, continued to provide emergency education to 107,000 children in the conflict-affected northern part of the country through the establishment of 79 community-based rural schools. Wells and pumps were installed and rehabilitated, and boreholes were constructed in the conflict areas of Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Kemo and Nana-Gribizi, benefiting over 110,000 persons.

28. After a huge increase in international attention in 2008, resource mobilization for humanitarian operations in the Central African Republic decreased during the reporting period. The 2009 consolidated appeals process for the Central African Republic of $116 million is currently funded at only 26 per cent, while the needs have increased. The Humanitarian Fund for the Central African Republic has become operational and made its second allocation in March 2009 in the amount of $4.9 million for the Central African Republic.

V. Gender

29. During the period under review, BONUCA continued to support Government and women's organizations to promote gender equality and equity in compliance with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, and 1820 (2008), on sexual violence. In February and March, the mission provided assistance to the Central African Republic platform for women's political participation, named "G23", to help it organize a general assembly for its official registration and the launching of its plan of action for 2009. Created in 2008 with BONUCA support, the G23 platform aims to increase women's participation in political activities, including the implementation of the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue. BONUCA also supported the Organisation des femmes centrafricaines, the umbrella non-governmental organization for women's organizations in the Central African Republic, as well as the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Solidarity, responsible for developing and coordinating Government policies and actions on gender issues at the national level, to carry out gender awareness-raising campaigns as part of the celebration of International Women's Day in March 2009.

30. In partnership with other United Nations agencies, BONUCA continued to sensitize the military contingents of MICOPAX about sexual and gender-based violence, with the objective of raising the awareness of the subregional peacekeeping force about the need to protect women. Specific information campaigns targeting police officers were also launched to sensitize the national police to pay particular attention to incidents of violence targeting women and to enhance police effectiveness in dealing with the issue. In May 2009, BONUCA explored ways and means for cooperation with the Women's Forum of the Central African Republic National Standing Committee for monitoring the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Established in October 2008, the Forum intends to create a platform to harmonize advocacy strategies dealing with women's promotion and strengthen the capacity of women and girls to participate more effectively in the democratic process.

31. As part of official celebrations of Mother's Day 2009 in the Central African Republic, BONUCA, on 6 June, donated mattresses and mosquito nets to female

inmates at the Bimbo correctional facility near Bangui, at a ceremony chaired by the wife of the Prime Minister, representing the country's First Lady. At another ceremony held at the National Assembly on the same day and chaired by the First Lady herself, BONUCA made a presentation on gender, peace, stability and development, with special emphasis on the key role played by women in the peacebuilding process in the country.

VI. Human rights and rule of law

32. The persistent fragility of the post-conflict situation characterized during the reporting period by an increase in violence in the northern regions has heightened the risk of human rights violations in the Central African Republic. The majority of alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law received during the reporting period have been related to the conflict-affected prefectures of Bamingui-Bangoran, Ouham, Ouham-Pendé and Vakaga.

33. The abuses reported in the north included summary and extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and detention, the destruction of homes and property and sexual and gender-based violence. The victims of these violations were mainly women, children and other vulnerable groups. The abuses were reportedly committed by Government forces, rebel movements and other armed groups, including self-defence groups and criminal gangs.

34. In other parts of the country, notably in the Sangha-Mbaéré, Nana-Mambéré, Kadei, Ombella-Mpoko, Kemo and Lobaye prefectures, increased acts of banditry and criminality as well as mob justice were reported, against the background of severe capacity limitations in the police and the judiciary, and widespread social and economic pressures. At the level of Bangui and the surrounding areas, a culture of impunity appeared to dominate the conduct of law enforcement and, in particular, security personnel. In addition, and despite the Government's continuing efforts, allegations of corruption within the judiciary remained a major challenge.

35. In February, my Representative on the human rights of internally displaced persons carried out a follow-up visit to the Central African Republic and highlighted the need to find durable solutions for the problems of internally displaced persons as part of a sustainable peace consolidation process. During the same period, BONUCA and other international partners supported the Government's efforts to finalize the drafting of the new penal and military codes which, once approved by Parliament, would enhance procedures for the administration of justice in the country. Meanwhile, the High Court of Justice, called for in the Constitution and the dialogue recommendations, was formally established on 12 May 2009. The High Court will mainly decide in cases of accusations of high treason and other acts of serious misconduct involving Cabinet ministers, Members of Parliament and the Head of State.

36. On 4 May, the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council considered the fulfilment of human rights obligations by the Central African Republic. The constructive dialogue with a high-level Government delegation and the recommendations emanating from that review covered a wide range of issues of concern, inter alia, including respect for the rights of women and children, including ending the recruitment of child soldiers and the practice of female genital mutilation, and decriminalizing witchcraft. I encourage the

Government to consider carefully the final report and recommendations and to strengthen further its cooperation with the Human Rights Council.

37. The Government agreed to set up a national human rights commission and had also embarked on efforts to restore discipline within the armed forces by convening, in April, a session of the Permanent Military Tribunal, where 22 junior military officers accused of human rights violations were prosecuted. However, the fight against impunity at higher levels of the military hierarchy remains largely unaddressed, contributing to the widespread concern over the perceived lack of accountability within the security and defence forces.

38. Questions about respect for the rule of law were raised in the media after reports emerged about the appointment, in early 2009, of Saiffe Durbar, a Pakistani national and businessman, as the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Central African Republic in charge of international cooperation, with residence in London. Mr. Durbar had reportedly been convicted in France for economic crimes. President Bozizé informed the interim head of BONUCA that the position was not an executive one; rather, it was only honorary in nature to recognize Mr. Durbar's important economic investments in the Central African Republic and was not in any way intended to serve as a shield from justice.

39. Meanwhile, the Protection Cluster of the BONUCA Human Rights Section, is collaborating with the Ministry of Defence to mainstream human rights, refugee law, child rights and international humanitarian law into the training modules for defence and security forces, a process likely to increase respect for the rule of law and to decrease cases of impunity.

40. The human rights situation is exacerbated by inadequate national justice capacities. The justice sector in the Central African Republic suffers from severe resource shortages, resulting in insufficient human resources in all the regions, deficient training and professionalization programmes, lack of material resources for justice activities and dilapidated justice institutions. A judicial advisory capacity within BINUCA would advise the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on justice issues and support national counterparts in the development of a national justice strategy to close the justice gap.

41. Conflict, mismanagement, corruption and poor infrastructure have led to deplorable prison conditions in the Central African Republic. The prison sites generally lack basic medical facilities and equipment, as well as water and sanitation, and fail to meet the minimum standards required under the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1955). A corrections sector advisory capacity within BINUCA would provide technical advice to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and initiate contact with national actors to facilitate development of a strategy for improving prison conditions. It is important to note there is no training for prison officials in a human rights-based approach to prison management, which has led to gross abuse and violations of the rights of prisoners.

42. I remain concerned about reports of alleged human rights violations in the Central African Republic, as I consider respect for human rights and the rule of law as a critical element for sustainable peace in the country. I therefore continued to stress the need to end reported abuses and ensure respect for human rights and the

rule of law in my meetings with the authorities of the Central African Republic during the period.

VII. Socio-economic situation

43. According to economic projections by the International Monetary Fund, 2009 will be particularly challenging for the Central African Republic because of the impact of the global economic crisis, with gross domestic product estimated to grow by only 2.4 per cent instead of 4.5 per cent, as initially projected. The year is also likely to witness an increase in State expenditure owing, in particular, to the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and preparations for elections in 2010. Pursuit of ongoing economic reforms should help improve performance in the mobilization of fiscal and customs revenue in 2009. Those reforms have also increased prospects for the Central African Republic to attain by 30 June, reportedly in a record time of two years, completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative that could lead to debt relief for the country.

44. At the same time, concern has been expressed about the continuing predominance of humanitarian relief over development cooperation as well as the concentration of economic development activity in only a few areas of the country. While the number of humanitarian organizations is increasing, there are few transition and development organizations working in conflict zones and even in areas in the south not directly affected by the conflict. There is therefore a growing risk that the areas in the south not directly affected by violence may become dependent on humanitarian assistance, or that other regions may fall into emergency situations because of the lack of development programmes.

VIII. Operational activities in support of development

45. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes pursued their activities during the reporting period within the framework of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, whose priorities include (a) promotion of good governance and respect for human rights, (b) post-conflict recovery and the fight against poverty, and (c) the fight against HIV/AIDS.

46. In the area of governance and crisis prevention, UNDP worked in close collaboration with BONUCA in support of the peace consolidation mandate. Specific support targeted the successful holding of the inclusive political dialogue, as well as technical support from the UNDP Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery to BONUCA to facilitate the work of the Follow-up Committee set up to promote the implementation of the provisions of the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement. It also provided expertise for judicial reform and to strengthen democratic processes related to the functioning of the National Assembly.

47. In the area of food security, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) distributed, during the first half of 2009, 1,300 tons of food seeds and agricultural equipment to cover the needs of 66,000 vulnerable families. FAO has also prepared a €10 million food facility project to be financed by the

European Commission and distributed 3,000 goats to vulnerable families regrouped and resettled in conflict-affected areas.

48. An estimated 141,076 children, including 69,169 girls, gained access to good quality basic education in 13 prefectures thanks to a UNICEF project, in partnership with local communities and non-governmental organizations, which made possible the rehabilitation and/or construction of 27 classrooms in 9 schools and provided a total of 5,000 benches and 81,000 textbooks.

49. In the health sector, the World Health Organization (WHO) supported the Government to cope with outbreaks of yellow fever, meningitis and poliomyelitis through local immunization campaigns. UNICEF, WHO and other partners organized the biggest health campaign of its kind in the Central African Republic to vaccinate 683,302 children from 6 to 59 months of age against measles and to provide long-lasting/insecticide-treated nets and soap to 856,918 children under 5 years of age. In February and April 2009, UNICEF and WHO also supported two poliomyelitis campaigns to vaccinate 760,000 children under 5 years of age in response to the discovery, at the end of 2008, of two cases of wild polio. In addition, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WHO provided financial and technical support to the drafting of guidelines for health districts in the framework of the national road map to reduce maternal and neo-natal mortality. UNFPA also continued to support the renovation of health infrastructure and to supply technical equipment and health products.

50. With regard to strengthening national capacity-building efforts and enhancing the fight against poverty, UNDP supported the organization of a round table on the private sector, employment and regional integration, held in Bangui on 19 February 2009 with extensive participation from international partners. Capacity-building of the Ministry of Planning, Economy and International Cooperation targeted support for the monitoring mechanisms for official development assistance flows to the Central African Republic and for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy (2008-2010). Through the support of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNDP is contributing to building the capacity of the microfinance structures of the Ministry of Finance. It is also supporting national efforts to fight environmental degradation.

51. In the fight against HIV/AIDS, financial support from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis is provided through UNDP to the National Council to Combat AIDS. At the end of 2008, 114,782 persons voluntarily tested for HIV/AIDS. A total of 5,597 women diagnosed as HIV-positive, 17,454 patients were provided with medical supervision and treatment, and 10,550 patients were provided with antiretroviral drugs. Under the malaria programme, 600,000 treated mosquito nets have been distributed and 132,474 children under 5 years of age have received antimalarial treatment. At the same time, in addition to the existing centres set up to care for orphans and vulnerable children, another six centres are programmed for construction in 2009.

IX. Collaboration with the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad

52. On 15 March, a ceremony for the transfer of the duties of the European Force (EUFOR) to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) was held in Birao, in the Vakaga region, in the presence of the Central African Republic Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization, the Minister for Communication and National Reconciliation, Cyriaque Gonda, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Antoine Gambi, the Ambassador of France to the Central African Republic, Jean-Pierre Vidon, and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union Commission in the Central African Republic, Jean-Claude Esmieu.

53. Meanwhile, BONUCA has continued to support MINURCAT in the implementation of its mandate in the north-eastern part of the Central African Republic. My Special Representative and Head of MINURCAT, Victor da Silva Angelo, visited Bangui on 27 April to introduce the newly appointed Force Commander, Brigadier General Mahamadou Kandji, to the authorities of the Central African Republic with whom he also discussed strategies for the stabilization of the Vakaga region where MINURCAT is deployed. In addition, he met with BONUCA colleagues to review ways and means of enhancing inter-mission cooperation. Mr. Angelo held discussions with senior officials of the Central African Republic, BONUCA and the United Nations country team as well as with some members of the diplomatic corps and of humanitarian non-governmental organizations when he visited Bangui again on 27 May. A MINURCAT liaison office located within BONUCA premises in Bangui has become operational.

X. Activities of the Peacebuilding Commission

54. Since the beginning of the year, the Peacebuilding Commission intensified its efforts to deepen its engagement with the Central African Republic, including developing an integrated strategy for that country. To that end, the Chairman of the configuration on the Central African Republic of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Grauls, travelled to Bangui at the end of January to launch the process of preparing the first draft of a strategic framework for peacebuilding. A team of two experts from the Peacebuilding Support Office stayed behind for two weeks to facilitate consultations among all stakeholders. The resulting draft was submitted to the Peacebuilding Commission in New York and to relevant United Nations departments, funds and programmes, for their consideration. The resulting document, which enjoys ownership by all actors involved in the country's peacebuilding efforts, including Government, civil society and the international community, was adopted at a formal meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on 6 May 2009.

55. Following the formal adoption of the strategic framework for peacebuilding in the Central African Republic, the Chairman of the configuration on the Central African Republic undertook a mission to Bangui from 21 to 23 May 2009 to present the framework document to all national stakeholders, including Government, Parliament, civil society, the United Nations system and the media, with a view to further strengthening national ownership of the strategy and officially starting its

implementation. The visit coincided with the ongoing effort to develop an integrated United Nations presence on the ground, which will have as part of its mandate support for the implementation of the country's strategic framework for peacebuilding.

56. The Chairman of the configuration on the Central African Republic, with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, has directed its efforts to (a) increase and sustain the attention of the international community to the situation in the Central African Republic, (b) mobilize resources for the implementation of the country's strategic framework for peacebuilding and (c) support the coordination of stakeholders. Over the reporting period, the Chairman has focused his efforts on sensitization and resource mobilization, and undertaken visits to the European Commission in Brussels and the World Bank in Washington, D.C., sensitization visits to the Department of State in Washington, D.C., and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation of Belgium. Most recently, the Chairman has focused increased attention on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the Central African Republic, through resource mobilization efforts, awareness-raising activities and participation in various coordination mechanisms on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

XI. United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic

57. As mentioned in the introduction to the present document, in its presidential statement adopted on 7 April (S/PRST/2009/5), the Security Council welcomed my recommendation of 3 March (see S/2009/128) to establish a United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic to succeed the current United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office. The Council also requested me to inform it, in my next report on the situation in the Central African Republic, about the structure and strength of BINUCA, "bearing in mind that resources for special political missions are limited".

A. Mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic

58. In the aforementioned presidential statement, the Security Council noted with satisfaction that the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office will perform the following tasks:

(a) To assist national and local efforts in implementing the dialogue outcomes, in particular through support for governance reforms and electoral processes;

(b) To assist in the successful completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the reform of security sector institutions, and support activities to promote the rule of law;

(c) To support efforts to restore State authority in the provinces;

(d) To support efforts to enhance national human rights capacity and promote respect for human rights and the rule of law, justice and accountability;

(e) To closely coordinate with and support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the implementation of the strategic framework for peacebuilding and projects supported through the Peacebuilding Fund;

(f) To exchange information and analysis with MINURCAT on emerging threats to peace and security in the region;

It also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the integrated office undertakes the following additional task:

(g) To help ensure that child protection is properly addressed in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, including by supporting the monitoring and reporting mechanism established according to resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005).

B. Transitional arrangements

59. The plan for the transition from BONUCA to BINUCA comprises three phases. Phase one would focus on the completion of the necessary preparatory work to ensure a seamless transition from BONUCA to BINUCA on 1 January 2010. That would include finalization of the budget of BINUCA, the recruitment of staff and the pre-positioning of facilities and other administrative support for BINUCA. Detailed implementation plans for each of the BINUCA integrated programmes would be developed and financial resources would be mobilized to begin implementation of integrated programme activities, including the identification of appropriate mechanisms for mobilizing and managing funds.

60. During phase two, BONUCA would cease operation on 31 December 2009 and would be in administrative liquidation from 1 January to 30 June 2010, while BINUCA would commence operation on 1 January 2010. During phase three, subject to developments on the ground, the activities envisaged under the integrated strategic framework are expected to be completed.

61. In the meantime, the Department of Political Affairs, working with the relevant departments, agencies and BONUCA, has initiated a series of logistical measures designed to facilitate a smooth and timely transition. These measures would be implemented within existing resources and would include the reconfiguration and renovation of office space, the reinforcement of electrical power generators and the improvement of information technology services, including the acquisition and installation of videoconferencing equipment.

C. Structure and strength of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office

62. It is proposed that BINUCA be headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, at the Assistant Secretary-General level, who would report to the Department of Political Affairs, which, as the lead institution, would work in close cooperation with the Peacebuilding Support Office and United Nations agencies, programmes and funds in the country to help the office discharge its mandated tasks. He or she would be assisted by a Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the Director (D-2) level, who would also serve as Resident Coordinator/

Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, and thus provide the structural linkages between the Organization's political, development and humanitarian work in the Central African Republic. The Deputy Special Representative would report to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his or her capacity as a deputy for the integrated office and would keep his or her reporting lines as Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative to the Head of the United Nations Development Group, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and UNDP, respectively.

63. The staffing strength of BINUCA should include my Special Representative and Deputy Special Representative, 63 international Professional civilian staff, 2 military advisers and 2 civilian police advisers, as well as 14 National Officers and 7 United Nations Volunteers.

64. BINUCA would comprise a front office to support my Special Representative, an office of the Deputy Special Representative/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, and four substantive sections focusing on the principal areas of the mission's mandate, namely political affairs, human rights and justice, security institutions and public information. A Chief of Staff at the D-1 level would, among other things, ensure the effective direction and integrated management of all the mission's activities in line with the strategic vision and guidance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, coordinate the work programmes and oversee the activities of all other entities located in the office of the Special Representative, hold the overall management responsibility for the staff working in the immediate office of the Special Representative and ensure that the Special Representative receives the required support to carry out his or her functions.

65. The front office of the Special Representative should include one Special Assistant (P-4) to ensure the smooth and coordinated flow of information between the Office of the Special Representative and other sections of the mission, one Gender Adviser (P-4) to ensure that gender perspectives are properly addressed in the implementation of the mission's mandate, in compliance with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). The Gender Adviser would provide advice and support on the implementation of the national action plan of the Central African Republic to promote gender equality and equity, and to enforce measures to curb violence against women, in particular sexual and gender-based violence. The front office would also comprise one Child Protection Adviser (P-4) to assist the Special Representative in ensuring that child protection, child rights and other children's issues are properly integrated in the mission's daily work and are properly addressed in the peace initiatives, in developing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, in supporting the monitoring and reporting mechanism established in accordance with Council resolution 1612 (2005) and in assisting the United Nations country team and the Government of the Central African Republic to improve the justice for children systems.

66. The Strategic Planning and Coordination Unit would comprise a Senior Strategic Planning Officer (P-5) and a Strategic Planning and Coordination Officer (P-4) who would support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Unit would operate under the strategic guidance of a Joint Policy Group chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General as Deputy Chairman, and comprising the heads of sections of the mission and the heads of agencies and programmes. It

would undertake joint United Nations planning and promote the integration of the political and development aspects of the Organization's engagement in the Central African Republic to ensure coherence among the strategic aims and programmatic activities of all United Nations actors in the country. The Unit would also facilitate the engagement of BINUCA and the United Nations country team with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. It would include staff from the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the United Nations country team and the Peacebuilding Support Office, who would be supported by a Strategic Planning and Coordination Officer (P-3/4) and four Planning and Coordination Officers, one each seconded by the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNDP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

67. The Political Affairs Section would assist national and local efforts to promote the smooth and full implementation of the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue, in particular by providing support for governance reforms and electoral processes and facilitating efforts to restore State authority throughout the national territory of the Central African Republic. It would, in particular, focus on facilitating the prevention and resolution of the emerging political and security disputes. The Section would provide strategic analysis on relevant internal and subregional political and security developments and maintain engagement with key national, subregional and international stakeholders, including MINURCAT. It would comprise a Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) assisted by one Political Affairs Officer (P-4), two Political Affairs Officers (P-3), one Civil Affairs Officer (P-3) and four Civil Affairs Officers at the National Officer level to be assigned to each of the four sub-offices to be determined jointly with the United Nations country team in order to ensure judicious sharing of resources and common facilities as well as effective geographical coverage of the entire country. The Civil Affairs Officers would work with national and local authorities and humanitarian partners to assist in the restoration and consolidation of State authority countrywide.

68. The Human Rights and Justice Section should comprise one Senior Human Rights Officer (P-5), three Human Rights Officers at the P-4, P-3 and P-2 levels, five United Nations Human Rights Volunteers, four of whom would lead the Section's human rights offices in the countryside, and four National Officers. In addition to its monitoring, protection and public reporting functions, the Section would continue to provide capacity-building support to national institutions and other partners in the peace process, including the regional peacekeeping force, MICOPAX, and collaborate closely with MINURCAT, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur to address common human rights challenges. The Section would also continue with efforts to mainstream human rights in the work of the various sections and units and assist efforts to fight impunity. In close coordination with other United Nations agencies, the Section would assist the Government to promote respect for the rule of law and good governance, in particular through the provision of regular updates on human rights trends in the country and the development of capacity-building strategies for civil society that would focus on training and sensitization on international human rights standards. It would, furthermore, contribute to developing and revitalizing the capacity of the justice system of the Central African Republic. One Judicial Affairs Officer (P-4) would advise the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on

justice issues and support national efforts to strengthen the justice system through the development of a national strategy. In coordination with national and international partners, the officers would advocate for resources in the justice sector and assist national actors in developing professional capacities and access to justice. The Section should also include two Prison Experts seconded by Member States to provide technical advice to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the BINUCA leadership on corrections issues and one National Programme Officer. Together with key partners, they would develop a prison strategy and implement plans for the strengthening of prison systems in the Central African Republic, including holding capacity, administration, security and training programmes. A key activity would also be advocating for funds to support prison programmes.

69. The Security Institutions Section would comprise a Chief of Section (P-5) and include two Police Advisers and two Military Advisers, to be seconded by national Governments, and one Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Adviser (P-3). The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Adviser would serve as the focal point on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration issues in BINUCA and would, for that purpose, work in close collaboration with UNDP. He or she would follow up on the political aspects of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and provide the ne y assistance to enable the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to discharge her functions as the Chairperson of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Steering Committee. The Section would focus on supporting national authorities with the reform of the security sector. It would provide strategic advice and capacity-building support to national security institutions, including the military and the police. It would also provide advice on the military and security implications of internal and subregional developments, and would liaise with MICOPAX and MINURCAT security officials.

70. The Public Information Section would comprise a Public Information Officer (P-4) and include a Public Information Officer (P-3) and one National Officer, who would assist with the development of a system-wide media strategy for the United Nations family in the Central African Republic to publicize United Nations activities in French and in the national language, Sango, and to project a common United Nations vision in close collaboration with the country team. The Section would focus on sensitizing the public about peace and reconciliation, working in close collaboration with the local media.

71. The Integrated Security and Safety Section would provide adequate security to the integrated mission throughout the Central African Republic. The Section would develop a security plan which would include overviews of the Central African Republic security risk assessment, describe the Central African Republic security management system and the accountabilities and responsibilities of management and staff involved in the system, and outline proactive and reactive measures associated with security contingencies, such as natural disasters, staff evacuations (international staff) and/or relocations (national and international staff), hostage incident management and response to other criminal acts committed against staff members. The Section would be headed by a Senior Security Officer (P-4/5), assisted by 1 Professional Security Officer, 16 Security Officers (Field Service) and 28 Local Security Assistants (General Service). Security management would be supported by the necessary administrative components and include a regional presence in Bangui, Bambari, Bossangoa and Bouar. The Security Officers would

work with national and local authorities in order to make possible effective support to United Nations staff and operations.

72. The Administration Section would provide cross-sectoral support for the smooth functioning of the mission in the areas of general administration, finance, budget, procurement, human resources, facilities management, information technology/communications, transportation, travel and security.

XII. Observations

73. The peace process in the Central African Republic is at a crossroads, requiring more than ever the continued support of the international community for national efforts to keep the process on track and avoid a relapse into conflict.

74. On 1 December, the Government and the people of the Central African Republic will commemorate the fifty-first anniversary of the proclamation of their Republic. They will be doing so with the country's republican institutions finally in place after years of recurrent conflict and unconstitutional rule in the course of the past five decades. That historic achievement, however, remains fragile, as the peace consolidation process in the Central African Republic continues to face major challenges and as those institutions are not always functioning as effectively as they should. I am encouraged by the growing commitment of the people, as a whole, to the democratic process and respect for the rule of law, which forms a solid foundation on which to anchor the hopes and aspirations of the country in the future.

75. The most pressing challenge, I believe, remains the need to reduce the high levels of extreme poverty under which the overwhelming majority of the people live in a country richly endowed with valuable natural resources. That is why I continue to stress the importance of a holistic approach in the quest for the sustainable stabilization of the Central African Republic, allowing for socio-economic, governance and political-military factors to be taken into account as part of a comprehensive package. It is also within that context that I welcome the adoption, on 6 May 2009, by the Peacebuilding Commission country specific configuration on the Central African Republic, of the strategic framework for peacebuilding in the Central African Republic, which identifies three priority areas on which to build partnership efforts between the Government of the Central African Republic and the international community, namely, security sector reform, governance and the rule of law, and economic growth. For that strategic partnership to produce the expected results, it is vital that both the Government and the people of the Central African Republic, on the one hand, and the international community, on the other, recommit to play their respective roles to help rebuild a stable, prosperous and democratic country. In that connection, I wish to reaffirm my personal support and that of the United Nations system for the country's ongoing stabilization effort.

76. The preparation and organization of elections scheduled for 2010 is a key outcome of the inclusive political dialogue. It is vital, in the interest of transparency and constitutional order, that the electoral calendar be respected. To that end, I welcome the work being done to revise the electoral code and stress the urgent need to set up the independent electoral commission. The United Nations would be prepared, once the requisite conditions are in place, to consider providing technical assistance to contribute to the electoral process.

77. The implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, another priority recommendation of the dialogue, is critical for sustainable peace and security, including for efforts towards security sector reform and the organization of peaceful elections. It is essential therefore for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme adopted by the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Steering Committee to be adequately funded in order to prevent any further delays in the implementation of projects. In that connection, I commend the States members of CEMAC for the generous financial assistance of CFAF 8 billion they announced in Libreville on 30 January 2009 to support the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the Central African Republic, encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to ensure that this financial commitment is secured for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration effort in accordance with its original intent and welcome durable linkages between disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the European Community development hubs to positively impact reintegration. I also welcome the contribution of $8 million announced by the World Bank in Bangui, in April, to support rural community development projects which eventually could provide resettlement opportunities for participants in the reintegration phase of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. I therefore appeal once again to the international community and the Government of the Central African Republic to respond generously and in a timely manner to the pressing financial requirement for the prompt and effective execution of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the Central African Republic.

78. I remain concerned about the persistence of impunity, which contributes to the creation of a climate in which massive human rights violations, corruption and non-respect for the rule of law tend to fester and flourish, and which also contributes to discouraging foreign economic investment. It is essential, if peace is to endure, to ensure that those accused of violating the law, including international humanitarian law, are promptly brought to justice. Reports of various forms of violence and discrimination against women and other vulnerable groups, as well as reports of the continued recruitment of children into armed groups, are especially disturbing. I acknowledge the efforts made by the Government of the Central African Republic, with support from BONUCA and the United Nations country team, to promote respect for children's rights and for gender equality and equity, including through enhancing women's participation in the political process. I welcome the Security Council's decision to include child protection aspects in the mandate of the future United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic.

79. The reference to the region in the north-eastern part of the Central African Republic, where that country's border with Chad and the Sudan intersect, as the "triangle of death" is a dramatic reminder of the regional scope and character of cross-border insecurity in the area. Given its limited capacity and resources, the Central African Republic is perhaps the least prepared, among the three countries, to deal on its own with the costly challenges of cross-border insecurity. As MINURCAT deployment in the Vakaga region of the north-eastern part of the Central African Republic proceeds, security conditions are likely to improve progressively. Over the longer term, the ongoing experience in the north-western part of the Central African Republic, where Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic have, since 2005, been engaged in joint operations in the context

of a tripartite arrangement, supported by BONUCA and CEMAC, to combat cross-border insecurity, continues to offer an example of immense promise which could usefully be replicated to address insecurity along the other porous borders of the Central African Republic.

80. Drawing, in particular, from the enriching experience of last December's inclusive political dialogue, there is a sense that the Central African Republic has turned over a new page and is looking increasingly towards a more hopeful future despite the many difficult challenges that remain. To help prevent a relapse, it would be important, in the immediate term, to build on the emerging momentum by taking concrete steps to (a) end rebellion and insecurity through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform, (b) ensure that the 2010 national elections take place in a timely, peaceful and credible manner, (c) end impunity and corruption and promote respect for human rights and the rule of law and (d) contribute to the improvement of the living conditions and quality of life of the population. Building on that relatively modest but forward-looking road map, I am confident that the Government and the people of the Central African Republic will take the lead towards sustainable peacebuilding, with the support of the international community.

81. The imminent establishment of a United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic will help ensure a better coordinated and a more coherent framework to optimize the assistance of the United Nations system to contribute even more productively to the stabilization of the Central African Republic. I would therefore like to recommend that the Security Council approve the proposed structure and mandate of BINUCA for an initial period of one year, as set out in paragraphs 58-72 above. Should the Council approve my recommendations concerning the establishment of BINUCA, it would be my intention to seek resources for its funding from the General Assembly.

82. I would like once again to express deep appreciation for the constructive efforts which members of the international community continue to make to help consolidate peace in the Central African Republic. In that connection, I wish to highlight the important multisectoral contribution of the regional partners of the Central African Republic, including CEMAC, ECCAS and the African Union, which, despite their own limited resources, have generously made available financial assistance and peacekeeping forces, and crucial mediation capacity, to assist the Central African Republic, in a spirit of regional solidarity.

83. I should like to pay tribute to the memory of President Omar Bongo Ondimba for his untiring commitment to the quest for sustainable peace in the Central African Republic. He devoted much energy, attention and resources to the process as Regional Mediator, and personally guided the work of the crucial inclusive political dialogue in December 2008, as well as the efforts which led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Libreville in June 2008.

84. I wish to commend the interim Head of BONUCA, Sammy Kum Buo, and BONUCA staff as a whole, as well as members of the United Nations country team in the Central African Republic, for their continued dedication to the cause of peace and development in that country, often under challenging conditions.

85. I am also grateful to Sahle-Work Zewde, who assumed her functions on 15 June 2009, for accepting to serve as my new Special Representative and Head of

BONUCA, at a critical phase in the mission, as the transition towards an integrated office (BINUCA) advances. I am confident that she will receive the full support and cooperation of the international community and, in particular, of the Government and the people of the Central African Republic. Finally, let me seize this opportunity to pay tribute to my former Special Representative, François Lonseny Fall, for the unfailing dedication and commitment with which he discharged his duties.